

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLANNING COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

**AGENDA TITLE:** Update of the Countywide Planning Policies

**PRESENTED BY:** Interjurisdictional Staff Team

**SUMMARY**

This report provides an overview of the King County Countywide Planning Policies 2011 Update Public Review Draft. Preliminary drafts of the updated policies were presented at three previous GMPC meetings. The attached document represents the first complete draft, with policies and supporting text, for review by policy makers and the general public. In the coming months, staff will continue work on the proposed policies, supporting text, and appendices for GMPC consideration and possible action in June 2011.

The policies presented here were prepared by the IJT with direction from GMPC and in collaboration with local government staff from throughout the county, Puget Sound Regional Council staff; housing, economic development and public health staff; and stakeholders representing a range of non-governmental interests. IJT has also considered broader public input throughout this update process.<sup>1</sup>

**BACKGROUND**

This Public Review Draft of the King County Countywide Planning Policies 2011 Update refines previous drafts reviewed by the GMPC. At the September 2010 GMPC meeting, staff presented draft policy language for the Environment chapter. At the December 2010 GMPC meeting, staff presented draft policy language for the Development Patterns, Housing and Economy chapters. At the February 23 meeting, staff presented policy language for the Transportation and Public Facilities and Services chapters.

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<sup>1</sup> Transmitted with this staff report are letters of comment received from Futurewise, the Housing Development Consortium, Peter Rimbos, and the City of Snoqualmie.

This staff report is organized by chapter and provides an overview of the policies proposed by IJT, as follows:

- Vision & Framework
- Environment
- Development Patterns
- Housing
- Economy
- Transportation
- Public Facilities and Services

## **VISION & FRAMEWORK**

The Vision & Framework chapter serves two purposes. It states the vision of King County in the year 2030, which is characterized by: environmental stewardship to protect the county's critical areas; permanent protection of the Rural Area and Natural Resource Lands; and compact urban development. The chapter also provides contextual narrative around the origin and purpose of the Countywide Planning Policies. This section of the chapter includes three Framework Policies regarding:

- The process for amending the CPPs;
- The monitoring of CPPs through key regional indicators; and
- The collaborative nature of identifying and directing investments to regional infrastructure and programs.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

The Environment Chapter emphasizes environmental sustainability to strengthen “the region’s economic, social, and environmental resiliency, while enhancing our ability to cope with adverse trends, including the challenges associated with climate change.”<sup>2</sup>

This is a full revision of the Environment chapter from the current CPPs. The existing CPPs were written prior to adoption of major environmental advances such as adoption of Critical Areas Ordinances by local jurisdictions, the formation of the Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs), and the creation of the Puget Sound Partnership, among others. Consequently, many of the existing policies are no longer relevant and do not adequately implement the new direction found in VISION 2040.

The focus of the Environment Chapter is on those issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries, have cross-jurisdictional impacts, or require a strong policy foundation for continued coordination across the county. The policies in the Environment chapter are supported by additional environmental policies in the Development Patterns, Transportation and Public Services chapters.

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<sup>2</sup> As defined by VISION 2040, [http://www.psrc.org/assets/1735/Part\\_I\\_Toward\\_a\\_Sustainable\\_Environment.pdf](http://www.psrc.org/assets/1735/Part_I_Toward_a_Sustainable_Environment.pdf).

The Environment chapter includes policies that address:

- Environmental Sustainability
  - Collaborative approaches to integrate development with ecological, social, and economic concerns to maintain healthy ecosystems and environments. Sustainable development is grounded in the Environment chapter and echoed as a theme throughout the CPPs.
  - Recognition of the importance of environmental justice principles.
- Earth and Habitat
  - Multijurisdictional coordination in designating and protecting critical areas, developing common methodologies for assessing habitat needs, and planning for open space and greenbelts that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- Flood Hazards
  - Recognition of the role of King County Flood Control District and calls for coordinated flood hazard management efforts throughout the District.
  - Encouragement of multi-jurisdictional approaches that balance regional levee maintenance standards with public safety and habitat protection objectives.
- Water Resources
  - Support for the protection of water resources by calling on jurisdictions to coordinate land use and transportation plans and actions for the benefit of Puget Sound and its watershed.
  - Call for the establishment of a multi-jurisdictional approach to water quality funding and monitoring.
  - Call for water conservation efforts to protect natural resources and support a sustainable water supply.
- Air Quality and Climate Change
  - Encouragement of land use patterns and transportation systems that minimize air pollution and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Relevant policies are found in the Environment, Development Patterns, and Transportation chapters.
  - Call for a countywide GHG reduction target and establishment of a countywide measurement framework to monitor progress toward that target.
  - Recognition of the role of energy efficiency in climate change reduction strategies.
  - Call for a climate change adaptation strategy.

## **DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS**

Countywide Planning Policies on development patterns address the location; types; design and form; and intensity of land uses throughout King County and its cities. They describe and implement a vision for future growth within the county, including its relationship to other functional elements of the Countywide Planning Policies such as transportation, public services, the environment, affordable housing, and public health. Development patterns policies are at the core of growth management efforts in King County, in furtherance of the goals and objectives of VISION 2040, and with recognition of the variety of local communities within which those goals and objectives are realized.

The Development Patterns chapter consolidates elements of several chapters in the current CPPs, including Land Use Pattern, Community Character and Open Space, and Contiguous and Orderly Development, as well as provisions of several Framework Policies. This new chapter responds to the policy direction in VISION 2040 and updates the policies to reflect current conditions. Subsections of the new chapter include Urban Growth Area; Centers; Urban Design and Historic Preservation; and Rural Area and Resource Lands.

The Development Patterns chapter includes policies that address:

- Urban Growth Area
  - Call for the designation of all land within King County as either Urban land within the Urban Growth Area (UGA), Rural Land, or Resource Land.
  - Promotion of a pattern of growth within the UGA that is consistent with the regional vision.
  - Establishment of housing and employment growth targets for the 2006 – 2031 planning period.
  - Identification of the review and amendment processes for monitoring the UGA.
  - Reaffirmation of the buildable lands program pursuant to the Growth Management Act.
  - Call for joint planning, especially with regard to the annexation of unincorporated Urban lands.
- Centers
  - Promotion of centers (countywide designated Urban Centers and Manufacturing/Industrial Centers as well as locally designated centers) and compact development. Policy DP-28 requires that a proposed Urban Center meet the criteria of designation by the PSRC as a Regional Growth Center as well as additional countywide-established criteria (beyond those required by the PSRC) regarding geographic size, zoning regulations, and infrastructure plans to accommodate certain densities of job activity and housing units.
- Urban Design and Historic Preservation
  - Inclusion of elements of urban design and form intended to integrate urban development into existing built and natural environments in ways that enhance both the urban and natural settings.

- Rural Area and Resource Lands
  - Minimization of negative environmental impacts to Rural Lands; call for appropriate character and location of development in Rural Areas; and identification of strategies to permanently protect such lands.

## **HOUSING**

The Housing chapter proposal makes policy and technical amendments to the current Affordable Housing chapter of the CPPs. The chapter responds to the policy direction in VISION 2040 and updates the policies to reflect current conditions.

The Housing chapter includes policies that address:

- Housing Supply and Needs Analysis
  - Policy direction for local comprehensive plan housing needs assessments, with detailed guidance on scope, data, and methods to be covered in a technical appendix to the CPPs.
- Affordable Housing Targets
  - Affordable housing targets that are calculated similarly to the current affordable housing targets, with technical updates to reflect current data and a refined approach to jobs-housing balance.
- Strategies to Meet Housing Needs
  - Provision of adequate land capacity and local and regional adoption of a range of tools to further housing production, diversity, and affordability, with detailed guidance on housing tools and resources to be covered in a technical appendix to the CPPs.
  - New policy language covering housing and affordable housing in mixed-use centers.
- Regional Cooperation
  - Multi-jurisdictional efforts to plan for and adopt strategies to meeting regional housing needs are an additional tool for identifying and meeting affordable housing needs.
- Measuring Results
  - Policy direction on monitoring housing activity and markets as a basis for improving outcomes for all economic and demographic segments of the county's population, with further detail on monitoring and evaluation provided in a technical appendix.

## **ECONOMY**

The policies within the Economy chapter are consistent with the VISION 2040 framework and Regional Economic Strategy (RES).<sup>3</sup> VISION 2040 integrates the RES with growth management, transportation, and environmental objectives to:

- support fundamental economic foundations, such as education, technology, infrastructure, and quality of life; and
- promote the region's specific economic clusters: aerospace, clean technology, information technology, life sciences, logistics and international trade, military, and tourism.

Overarching Economy policies call for aligning local economic policies and strategies with VISION 2040 and the Regional Economic Strategy, supporting the adopted 20-year employment targets, and identifying and supporting the region's industry clusters within King County.

The Economy chapter includes policies that address:

- Business Development
  - Support for business retention and development, including local government actions, such as predictability of local regulations, and public-private partnerships.
  - Integration of the healthy communities concept into the Economy chapter, calling for support of the regional food economy, including production, processing, wholesaling and distribution of the region's agricultural food and food products.
- People
  - Support for education and workforce training, celebrating the economic advantage of cultural diversity, and addressing disparity in income and employment for those that are economically disadvantaged.
- Places
  - Reinforcement of the centers-oriented approach of the region's growth strategy and supports infrastructure investments that are aligned with the region's economic strategy.
  - Economic activity in Rural Cities ( new policy EC-21).

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Goals and policies in the Transportation chapter build on the existing Countywide Planning Policies and the Multicounty Planning Policies in VISION 2040. The policies also support Transportation 2040, the region's functional transportation plan that identifies priorities for the region's major investment decisions.

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<sup>3</sup> The Regional Economic Strategy is the region's federally required comprehensive economic development strategy as well as VISION 2040's economic functional plan.

The Transportation chapter includes policies that address:

- **Supporting Growth**
  - Emphasis on transit and other modes that provide alternatives to driving alone within and between centers, supporting the Regional Growth Strategy as described in VISION 2040.
  - Reinforcement of the critical relationship between land use and transportation and are intended to guide the decisions made at the state, regional and local levels that affect that relationship.
- **Mobility**
  - Promotion of the mobility of people—including transit-dependent populations—through a multi-modal transportation system that supports access and connectivity for all users.
  - Recognition of the county’s regional economic value by supporting the effective management of the freight-mobility transportation system.
- **System Operations**
  - Protection of public investments through maintenance, preservation, and safety improvements of the existing transportation system to avoid costly replacement projects.
  - Promotion of the identification of reliable financing methods and capabilities, coordination of transportation investment opportunities, and monitoring of transportation investment performance over time.
  - Promotion of public health and safety by minimizing human exposure to vehicle emissions; reducing greenhouse gas emissions; integrating the needs of pedestrians and bicyclists in the local and regional transportation plans; and developing coordinated prevention and disaster response plans.
  - Encouragement of technologies, programs, and other strategies to optimize the existing infrastructure and promote clean transportation opportunities.

## **PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES**

The Public Facilities and Services chapter consolidates elements of several chapters in the current CPPs, including Contiguous and Orderly Development, Community Character, and Siting Public Capital Facilities, as well as provisions of several Framework Policies. These policies ensure that utilities provide complete service within the UGA in ways that do not promote growth in the rural areas.

The Public Facilities and Services chapter includes policies that address:

- **Collaboration among jurisdictions**

- Recognition of cities as appropriate providers of services to the UGA, either directly or by contract.
- Utilities
  - Cost-effective provision utility services including water supply; sewage treatment and disposal; solid waste; energy; and telecommunications.
  - Promotion of conservation and efficient use of resources to sustain those resources for use by future generations.
  - Promotion of alternative technologies as appropriate to improve service delivery and protect public health and safety.
- Human and Community Services
  - Encouragement of location and provision of human, community, and educational services and facilities in a manner to support the Regional Growth Strategy and distinguish urban communities from rural communities.
- Siting Public Capital Facilities
  - Encouragement of all jurisdictions to work collaboratively and consider environmental justice principles when siting regional capital facilities to avoid disproportionate effects on the communities in which they are located.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will continue to work on finalizing the King County Countywide Planning Policies 2011 Update for GMPC consideration and possible action at the next meeting on June, 29, 2011. Specifically, staff will:

- Revise policies and text based on GMPC feedback today and from comments submitted by the public and from PSRC;
- Complete the glossary;
- Complete the technical appendices; and
- Compile a list of action items.

Comments on the Public Review Draft can be submitted through **May 20<sup>th</sup>**. Staff will be available to meet with any of the stakeholder groups, as requested, and to respond to any questions from the public. The proposed document will be available for distribution no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> – two weeks in advance of the next GMPC meeting.



### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

While no formal action by GMPC is requested at this time, staff seeks feedback from GMPC regarding the direction expressed by the draft policies included herein.